FILED 2007 OCT 19 AM 10: 31 1 VICTOR MANUEL TORRES California Bar No. 140862 CLEAK (IS D.STRICT COURS SUBTACEN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIL 2 2664 Fourth Avenue San Diego, CA 92103 3 Telephone: (619) 232-8776 DEPUTY Facsimile: (619) 232-8857 4 lawforvatos@vahoo.com 5 EZEKIEL E. CORTEZ California Bar No. 112808 6 1010 Second Avenue, Suite 1850 San Diego, CA 92101 7 Telephone: (619)237-0309 8 Attorney for Plaintiffs SAMANTHA LOPEZ (by and through her Legal Custodian LILIANA CORTEZ), FILADELFO LOPEZ LARA, ALONZO LOPEZ, ANNA LOPEZ, & 9 JULIA LOPEZ 10 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 11 FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA Case No. 028 JLS WMC 12 SAMANTHA LOPEZ, a minor (by and) through her Legal Custodian LILIANA) 13 CORTEZ), FILADELFO LOPEZ LARA,) 7 **COMPLAINT FOR MONEY** ALONZO LOPEZ, ANNA LOPEZ, & JULIA) **DAMAGES:** 14 (1) Wrongful Death 42 U.S.C. § 1983; LOPEZ, as surviving heirs of DAVID) (2) Excessive Force 42 U.S.C. § 1983; ARNULFO LOPEZ, deceased, 15 (3) Assault & Battery (4) Intentional Infliction of Emotional 16 Plaintiffs, **Distress** (5) Negligence 17 **DEMANDFOR JURY TRIAL** 18 COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, a municipal) corporation, CITY OF VISTA, a municipal) 19 corporation & DOES 1-50, inclusive, 20 **Defendants** 21 22 COME NOW, the ESTATE OF DAVID ARNULFO LOPEZ, through its personal 23 representatives and surviving heirs, SAMANTHA LOPEZ, a minor (by and through her Legal 24 Custodian LILIANA CORTEZ), FILADELFO LOPEZ LARA, ALONZO LOPEZ, ANNA 25 LOPEZ and JULIA LOPEZ, by their attorneys of record, VICTOR MANUEL TORRES and

EZEKIEL E. CORTEZ, and allege and complain as follows:

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INTRODUCTION

- This is an action for money damages brought pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983 and 1988, and the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of California, against defendants the COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, the CITY OF VISTA, and DOES 1-50.
- 2. Jurisdiction is based upon 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343, and on the pendent jurisdiction of this court to entertain claims arising under state law under 28 U.S.C. § 1367. Venue is proper in the Southern District of California because the acts or omissions which form the basis of the Plaintiff's claims occurred in the County of San Diego.
- The matter in controversy exceeds, exclusive of interests and costs, the jurisdictional minimum of this court of One Hundred Fifty Thousand dollars (\$150,000.00).
- 3. Plaintiffs have complied with California Government Code §§ 800 et seq. Plaintiff's timely claims have been denied or the time for timely response by the Local Public Entities concerned has elapsed.

### **PARTIES**

- At all times relevant to this complaint, DAVID ARNULFO LOPEZ was an individual residing in the County of San Diego and his death, as set forth more fully below, resulted in the creation of the ESTATE OF DAVID ARNULFO LOPEZ, which brings this lawsuit by its personal representatives and surviving heirs SAMANTHA LOPEZ, his daughter, FILADELFO LOPEZ LARA, his father, ALONZO LOPEZ, his brother, ANNA LOPEZ, his sister, and JULIA LOPEZ, his sister.
- 5. At all times relevant to this complaint, each of the Plaintiffs was an individual residing in the County of San Diego.

- 6. Plaintiffs are truly ignorant of the true names and capacities of DOES 1-50, inclusive, and/ or are truly ignorant of the facts that give rise to their liability.
- 7. These DOE defendants are agents, servants and employees of each other or of the other named defendants and were acting at all times with the full course and scope of their agency and employment, with the full knowledge and consent, either expressed or implied, of their principal and/ or employer and each of the other named defendants, and each of the defendants had approved or ratified the actions of the other defendants thereby making the currently named defendants liable for the acts and/ or omissions of their agents, servants and/ or employees.
- At all times relevant to this complaint, defendants COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO and CITY OF VISTA were municipal corporations operating in the County of San Diego.

### **FACTS**

- On or about October 21, 2006, at about 6:15 p.m. Sheriff's Deputies received a telephone call concerning a family disturbance call at the trailer park at 1205 North Santa Fe Drive, Vista, CA 92083. The call was made by David Arnulfo Lopez's estranged wife.
- 10. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Lopez's estranged wife updated her previous call to state that Mr. Lopez was going through her trailer "stabbing stuff."
- 11. At 6:43 p.m., the first Sheriff's Deputy arrived at the scene. After another two Sheriff's Deputies arrived, the Deputies contacted Mr. Lopez's estranged wife who directed the Deputies to space number 59.
- Upon arrival at space 59, the Sheriff's Deputies reportedly observed a male looking through the trailer's sliding glass door. One of the Deputies deployed his police canine into the trailer. A male was observed trying to break through the bathroom window but was unsuccessful.

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- 13. Shortly thereafter, David Arnulfo Lopez emerged from the trailer through the front door where the three Sheriff's Deputies were positioned with their government-issued firearms drawn.
- 14. When David Arnulfo Lopez emerged from the trailer he was struck at least twelve times by bullets in the thorax, back, buttocks, shoulder and thigh.
- 15. When David Arnulfo Lopez emerged from the trailer he was not armed with any weapon and did not pose any threat to the safety of himself or others.
- 16. It is unclear whether David Arnulfo Lopez died immediately from his gunshot wounds. Mr. Lopez was declared dead at the scene. No attempts to resuscitate or aid Mr. Lopez are known to have been given.
- 17. The defendant Sheriff's Deputies had not witnessed Mr. Lopez commit any crime, had no warrant for arrest and no legal cause to seize the person of Mr. Lopez.
- 18. As a direct and proximate result of the acts state herein by the defendants, individually and collectively, David Arnulfo Lopez suffered the following injuries and damages:
- a. Violation of his rights guaranteed under the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States to be free from unreasonable search and seizure;
  - Loss of his life; b.
- Physical pain and suffering and emotional trauma and suffering as the result of c. the excessive use of force, and being shot by firearms at least twelve times at close range;
- 19. Plaintiff Samantha Lopez suffered the untimely end of her relationship with her father, with corresponding loss of his income, services, protection, care, assistance, society, companionship comfort, guidance, counsel and advice.
- 20. Plaintiff Filadelfo Lopez Lara suffered the untimely end of his relationship with his son, with corresponding loss of his income, services, protection, care, assistance, society,

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companionship comfort, guidance, counsel and advice, and was forced to incur funeral expenses and costs for the disposition of his son's remains.

- 21. Plaintiffs Alonzo Lopez, Anna Lopez, and Julia Lopez suffered the untimely end of their relationship with their brother, with corresponding loss of his income, services, protection, care, assistance, society, companionship comfort, guidance, counsel and advice, and were forced to incur funeral expenses and costs for the disposition of their brother's remains.
- 22. The actions of the defendants, individually and collectively violated the following clearly established and well-settled federal constitutional rights of David Arnulfo Lopez:
  - Freedom from unreasonable seizure of his person;
- b. Freedom from the use of excessive, unreasonable and unjustified force against his person.

### FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION. 42 U.S.C. § 1983 – WRONGFUL DEATH

- 23. Paragraphs 1 through 22 are incorporated herein by reference as though fully set forth.
- 24. Defendants, individually and collectively, acting under color of law, committed wrongful acts which proximately caused the death of David Arnulfo Lopez. Specifically, the defendants, individually and collectively, deprived David Arnulfo Lopez of his rights under the Constitution of the United States to be free from the use of excessive force by law enforcement agents, punishment without due process and unlawful stop, search and seizure without reasonable suspicion, probable cause and due process of law. Such deprivation resulted in the death of David Arnulfo Lopez. By their acts and/ or omissions, the defendants violated the constitutional guarantees afforded David Arnulfo Lopez under the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments. The defendants, individually and collectively used excessive force as alleged herein against David Arnulfo Lopez with a purpose to cause harm that is unrelated to the legitimate use of force. The force was used to make David Arnulfo Lopez suffer and to punish him. The force used was

unreasonable and performed with a deliberate indifference to the safety and welfare of David Arnulfo Lopez and others. The shooting of an unarmed cornered man, posing no risk of harm to persons or property is objectively unreasonable and the defendants were such that no reasonable law enforcement agent would have considered the use of force to be justified thereby violating David Arnulfo Lopez's constitutional freedom from unreasonable seizure.

- 25. Plaintiffs SAMANTHA LOPEZ, by and through her Legal Guardian Liliana Cortez, FILADELFO LOPEZ LARA, ALONZO LOPEZ, ANNA LOPEZ, and JULIA LOPEZ claim damages for the wrongful death of David Arnulfo Lopez and for loss of his income, services, protection, care, assistance, society, companionship, comfort, guidance, counsel and advice, and for funeral expenses and costs for the disposition of David Arnulfo Lopez's remains under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and the Constitution and Statutes of the State of California.
- 26. Defendants COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO and CITY OF VISTA also maintained a custom, policy or practice of using excessive force against Hispanic males in an effort to intimidate Hispanic males. Defendants COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO and CITY OF VISTA also maintained an unconstitutional policy regarding the use of alternative force. The COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO and the CITY OF VISTA knew or should have known that it should arm and train its Sheriff's Deputies in the use of force other than deadly force, such as tasers or stun-guns. This unconstitutional policy and refusal to arm and train its Sheriff's Deputies in alternatives to deadly force was a direct cause of the death of David Arnulfo Lopez.
- 27. The conduct alleged herein violated the constitutional rights of David Arnulfo Lopez and resulted in the deprivation of plaintiff's rights alleged herein, which has legally, proximately, foreseeably, and actually cause plaintiffs to suffer emotional distress, pain, suffering, and further general and special damages according to proof at the time of trial.

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28. The conduct alleged herein also amounts to oppression, fraud, or malice within the meaning of Civil Code § 3294, thereby justifying the award of exemplary damages against these defendants in an amount according to proof at the time of trial in order to deter the defendants from engaging in similar misconduct and to make an example by way of monetary punishment. Plaintiffs are also entitled to attorney fees and costs of suit herein pursuant to statute.

### SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION. ASSAULT AND BATTERY – WRONGFUL DEATH

- Paragraphs 1 through 22 are incorporated herein by reference as though fully set forth. 29.
- Defendants, individually and collectively, acted with intent to cause harmful or offensive 30. contact with the person of David Arnulfo Lopez and the intended harmful or offensive contact did in fact occur. The harmful or offensive contact was in no way privileged nor consented to and was excessive, unreasonable and done with deliberate indifference to the rights and safety of David Arnulfo Lopez, and was done with the intent to inflict punishment on David Arnulfo Lopez, above and beyond the reason for using force in the first instance. Sheriff's Deputies, named herein as DOES 1-50, assaulted and battered David Arnulfo Lopez.
- As a result of the defendant's intent to cause harmful or offensive contact with the 31. person of David Arnulfo Lopez and the fact that the intended harmful or offensive contact did in fact occur, the Estate of David Arnulfo Lopez, and consequently his heirs, have suffered damages according to proof at the time of trial. Such damages are in excess of this court's jurisdictional minimum and include loss or damage that David Arnulfo Lopez sustained or incurred before death and damages that David Arnulfo Lopez would been entitled to recover had he survived.
- Defendant's conduct, individually and collectively, also amount to oppression, fraud or 32. malice within the meaning of Civil Code § 3294, et seq., and punitive damages should be assessed against each defendant for the purpose of punishment and for sake of example.

33. Plaintiffs SAMANTHA LOPEZ, by and through her Legal Guardian Liliana Cortez, FILADELFO LOPEZ LARA, ALONZO LOPEZ, ANNA LOPEZ, and JULIA LOPEZ claim damages for the wrongful conduct of the defendants resulting in the death of David Arnulfo Lopez and for loss of his income, services, protection, care, assistance, society, companionship comfort, guidance, counsel and advice, and for funeral expenses and costs for the disposition of David Arnulfo Lopez's remains under the laws of the State of California.

# THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION. INTENTIONAL INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

- 34. Paragraphs 1 through 22 are incorporated herein by reference as though fully set forth.
- 35. By engaging in the acts, omissions and misconduct alleged herein, the defendants engaged in outrageous conduct with a reckless disregard of the probability of causing plaintiffs to suffer emotional distress.
- 36. As a direct, proximate and foreseeable result of defendant's outrageous conduct, individually and collectively, plaintiffs have suffered severe emotional distress.
- 37. Defendant's conduct, individually and collectively, also amount to oppression, fraud or malice within the meaning of Civil Code § 3294, et seq., and punitive damages should be assessed against each defendant for the purpose of punishment and for sake of example.
- 38. Plaintiffs SAMANTHA LOPEZ, by and through her Legal Guardian Liliana Cortez, FILADELFO LOPEZ LARA, ALONZO LOPEZ, ANNA LOPEZ, and JULIA LOPEZ claim damages for the wrongful conduct of the defendants resulting in the death of David Arnulfo Lopez and for loss of his income, services, protection, care, assistance, society, companionship comfort, guidance, counsel and advice, and for funeral expenses and costs for the disposition of David Arnulfo Lopez's remains under the laws of the State of California.

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### FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION. NEGLIGENCE

- 39. Paragraphs 1 through 22 are incorporated herein by reference as though fully set forth.
- 40. Defendants, individually and collectively, had a duty to plaintiffs to act with ordinary care and prudence so as not to cause harm or injury to another.
- 41. By engaging in the acts alleged herein, the defendants failed to act with ordinary care and breached their duty of care owed to plaintiffs.
- 42. As a direct, proximate and foreseeable result of the defendant's breach of their duty of care, plaintiff's suffered damages in an amount according to proof at the time of trial.

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### WHEREFORE, all Plaintiffs request that this court:

- a. Award general damages, including emotional distress, to all plaintiffs against all defendants;
- b. Award special damages to all plaintiffs against all defendants;
- c. Award costs of this action to all Plaintiffs;
- d. Award exemplary damages to all plaintiffs against all defendants;
- e. Award reasonable attorney's fees and costs to the all Plaintiffs on Count I of the complaint; and
- f. Award such other and further relief as this court may deem appropriate.

All Plaintiffs hereby demand a jury trial.

DATED: 10/19/07

Plaintiffs SAMANTHA LOPEZ (by and through her Legal Guardia, LILIANA CORTEZ), FILADELFO OPEZ LARA, ALONZO LOPEZ,

ANNA LOPEZ, and JULIA LOPEZ

DATE: 10/19/07

Attorney for Plaintiffs

EZEKAEL EL CORTEZ

SJS 44 (Rev. 11/04)

### CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE REVERSE OF THE FORM.)

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		LAND INVOLVED.							
(c) Attorney's (Finn Name, Address, and Telephone Number) VICTOR MANUEL Attorneys (If Known)									
TORRES, 2664 FOURTH AVE., SAN DIEGO, O7 CV 2028 JLS WMC									C.
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### UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO DIVISION

# 143688 - KD

October 19, 2007 10:34:04

### Civ Fil Non-Pris

USAO #.: 07CV2028-JLS

Amount.:

\$350.00 CK

Check#.: BC 2930

Total-> \$350.00

FROM: CIVIL FILING

LOPEZ, MINOR, ET AL V. SAN DIE

ET AL.